**Lexical Task Based Language Teaching Notes**

On November 22, I had the opportunity to attend Jane Willis's workshop at ITI Istanbul entitled "A Lexical Approach to Task-Based Language Learning." The program focused on why learners should focus on lexis as opposed to grammar based instruction, as to encourage students to have more opportunity for meaningful interaction in a structured classroom setting.  
  
  
  
 There are three major aspects of developing lexis-based vocabulary learning.  
  
1. Noticing or giving attention to an item. There should be an emphasis on creating the need for motivation by having students use the language to complete a task. This also includes bringing words to class and defining words. We should also explain why the language is needed (prefereably through an applicable task).  
2. Retrieval. This can be either receptive retrieval (retrieving meaning) or productive retrieval (retrieving the form). An example task from the seminar was spaced repetition through having a quiz where there are 3 groups of students and each group takes a quiz based on a random prior text.  
3. Generative Processing or creative use. An example task was writing a summary of a text that contains 3 factual errors (without using the text) and having another student evaluate it.  
  
Paul Nation (2001) 63-73. Laufer and Hsalstign (2001)  
  
 Regarding TBLT:  
1. There needs to be a need to use the language.  
2. The more cognitive, the more retention. For example: Looking up new words and phrases during extrinsic reading.  
3. To create autonomous learners, tasks should have an evaluative component. "Is this the right word."  
  
 Certain actions can cause interference that disrupts retrieval.  
1. pre-teaching lexical sets.  
2. contrasting - since/for, effective/affective  
3. teaching of opposites as exact opposites

Effective Tasks  
1. Does it focus on meaning?  
2. Is there a clear outcome?  
3. What are the terms of the outcome? Is completion necessary?  
4. Is it language students will use in the real world for real world tasks?  
  
Example tasks:  
1.Planning for a class party.  
2.Creating a leaflet.  
3.Go to a website and find 5 phrases about x, or 5 new words about x, or ask 5 questions about x.  
4.Create a web quest about festivals, produce a poster, PPP, and bring in the clothing.  
5.7-9 essential questions per week (these can be posted on a blog and responded to subsequently), and on the next Monday revisited. Triptico (website) can be used to give these questions randomly to students keeping their minds fresh.   
6. From Mrs. Willis herself: Take a text like "The Boy Who Came Out of the Cold", and split the class into 2 groups. Then, have group 1 find 5 words that describe cold and group to find 5 time expressions. Students can then teach each other the new words and phrases.  
7. Have yellow day for kindergarten, where all students wear yellow and learn about items that are yellow, such as bananas, daisies, ect.  
8. Write all the people in a text and write the verbs they do.  
9. Students will read only 3 lines of a text and then think of questions. They will discuss the questions with a partner and then read the text. To retrieve the language, students can rewrite the story in order.  
Application:  
  
Grading: Give a tick for new correct vocabulary and even have students read it out during class to promote positive use of new phrases and words.  
  
Word(s) and Phrase(s) of the Day: New phrases can be pre-taught each day that are needed to complete a certain task.  
  
Using pictures to create curiosity (creating a need). The teacher can display pictures that are personal and/or deal with the concept (also serves as a pathway to introduce culture) and the students can ask questions to each other. The natural language then can be banked. This can be integrated with such websites like wallwisher.com or other forums.  
  
  
Further Actions:  
  
It has been a goal of mine to meld art history into my lessons (not to mention the plethora of art that can be found at local galleries in order to teach culture). Each week based on the lesson plan, and thus topic, I can project these and have students ask questions. I will scaffold students to ask higher order questions. For example: We saw a picture at the seminar when we walked in (board work) of a lake in the mountains. One questions people could have asked is, "Where are these mountain?" but that is not cognitively sufficient. A better question could be, "Why do you think these mountains are formed this way in this part of the world?" Instead of comprehension, as educators we should aim for analyzation and synthesis. Two or more pictures could also be compared and contrasted - or even the connections could be contemplated.  
  
Needed Materials: Short texts, which can be brought by students.  
If teaching art and culture, intriguing pictures are needed.  
  
  
Reflective questions:  
1. Are we planning for tasks that are efficiently requiring and motivating students to use language to complete tasks?  
2. How are we creating a cycle where lexis is noticed, retrieved, and then generated? To what degree?